


# BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

## For Fiscal Year 2022

Primary Applicant (Name and Address):  Whitewater Wideband LLC d/b/a Edge Broadband 10 W Evergreen Pkwy Suite 6 Elkhorn WI 53121	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, <a href="http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx">http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx</a> . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions.  Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: <b>March 17, 2022</b> at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. <b>Late applications will not be accepted.</b>
	Contact for further information: <a href="mailto:PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov">PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov</a>
	Date: December 1, 2021
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p>	
<p><b>Applicant Certification:</b> In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>	
Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print)  Brian Madl	Title  President
Phone (262)458-4220	
Signature of Authorized Representative 	Date 3/14/2022

### SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name <b>Whitewater Wideband LLC d/b/a Edge Broadband</b>	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) <b>\$1,960,695.00</b>
Federal Employer Identification No. <b>46-4398311</b>	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) <b>\$4,574,954.00</b>
Contact Name and Title <b>Brian Madl CEO</b>	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) <b>\$6,535,649.00</b>
Telephone Number <b>262-458-4220</b>	Project Name <b>Rural Fort Atkinson</b>
E-mail Address(es) <a href="mailto:brian@edgebroadband.com">brian@edgebroadband.com</a>	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) <b>FTTH</b>
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) <b>Last Mile</b>
Grant Manager Contact Name	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations <b>Jefferson County - Ben Wehmeier – County Administrator 311 S. Center Ave Room 111 Jefferson WI 53549 FEIN: 39-6005705</b>  <b>School District of Fort Atkinson – DJ Scullin – Director of Technology 201 Park Street Fort Atkinson, WI 53538 FEIN: 39-6008361</b>  <b>Edge Broadband – Brian Madl – President N8990 County Road P, Whitewater WI 53190 FEIN: 46-4398311</b>	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) This project will extend fiber to reach 2,559 rural locations in the rural Fort Atkinson school district who are currently unserved and underserved by extending the current backbone jointly constructed between the City of Fort Atkinson and Fort School District using XGSPON electronics to offer up to 10,000Mbps symmetrical services.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed <b>10000</b>	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed <b>10000</b>

Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location <b>50</b>	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location <b>10</b>
County or Counties served by this project <b>Jefferson</b>	Community or Communities served by this project Townships of Koshkonong, Cold Spring, Hebron, Jefferson, Oakland and Sumner in rural Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County
List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve <b>ATT, Spectrum (wireline)</b> <b>Edge Broadband, Netwurx, Bertram, UpNet (fixed wireless)</b> <b>ATT, T-Mobile, US Cellular, Verizon (mobile wireless)</b>	
Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in <a href="#">Section 1.4</a> of the application instruction? (yes/no) <b>YES</b>	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) <b>YES</b>
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). <b>187</b>	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). <b>2,559</b>
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? <b>45</b>	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? <b>793</b>
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? <b>YES</b>	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? <b>YES</b>
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? <b>YES</b>	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? <b>NO</b>
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? <b>YES</b>	

## FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

### Budget & Income Summary



Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

#### Grant Summary

Grant Applicant:	Project:
Edge Broadband	Rural Fort Atkinson

#### Budget

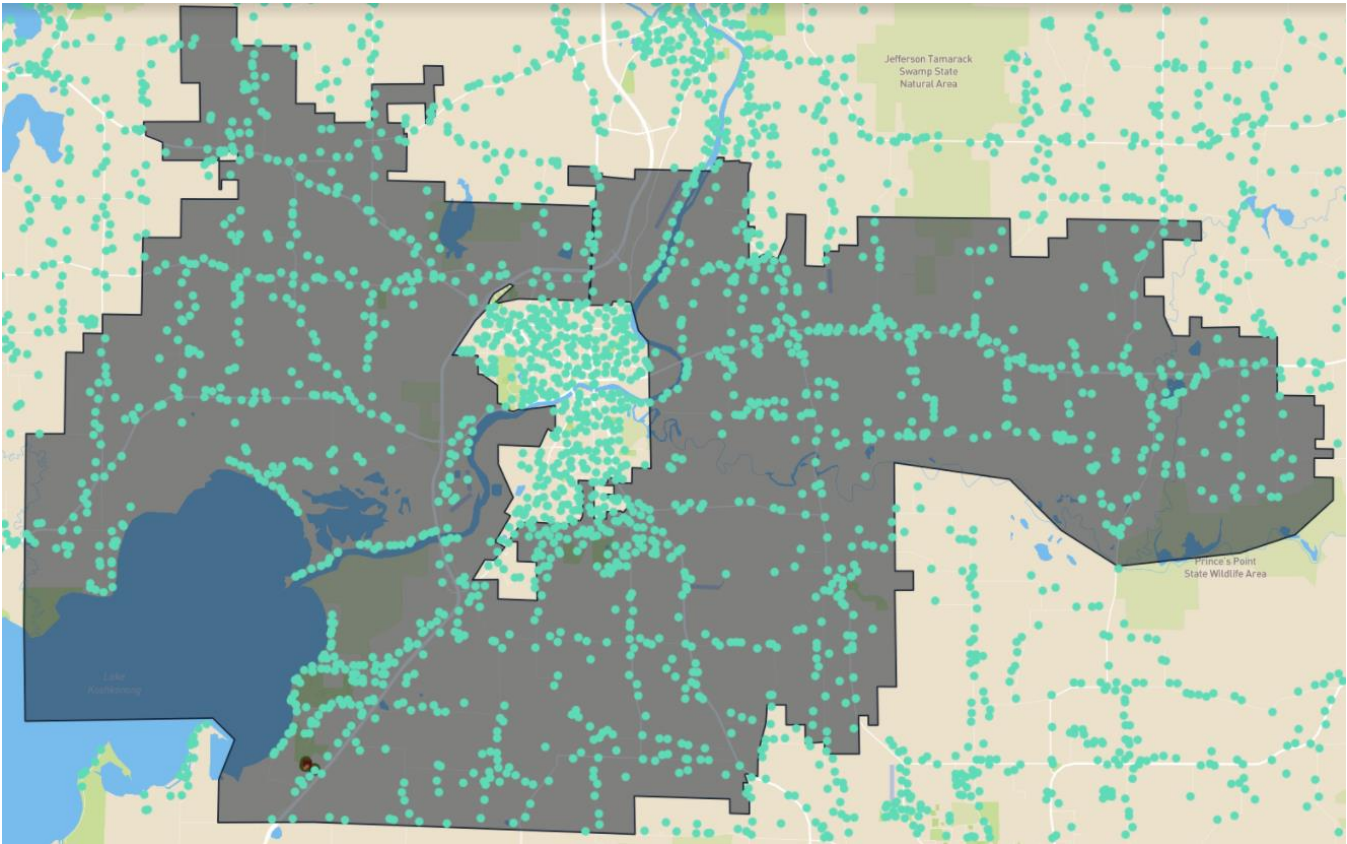
Line:	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 1,522,470.00	\$ 3,552,430.00	\$ 5,074,900.00
2	Equipment	\$ 68,060.00	\$ 158,805.00	\$ 226,865.00
3	Supplies	\$ 370,165.00	\$ 863,719.00	\$ 1,233,884.00
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)			\$ -
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$ -
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 1,960,695.00	\$ 4,574,954.00	\$ 6,535,649.00
70.0% match requested				

#### Pledged Contributions

#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	Edge Broadband	Applicant	Cash	\$ 4,324,954.00
2	Jefferson County	Partner	Cash	\$ 250,000.00
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$ 4,574,954.00

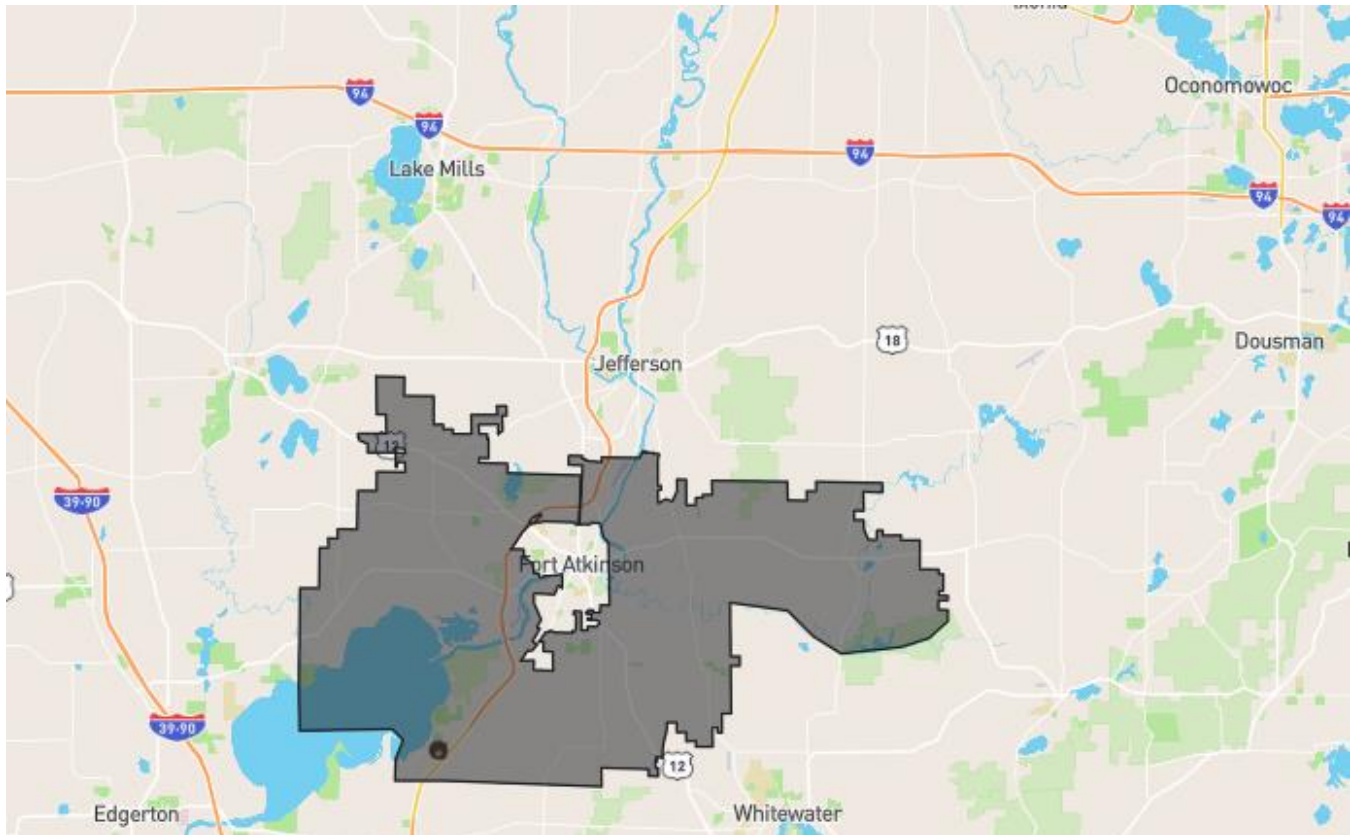
# Project Map - Detailed View

Proposed Rural Fort Atkinson



# Project Map - Overview

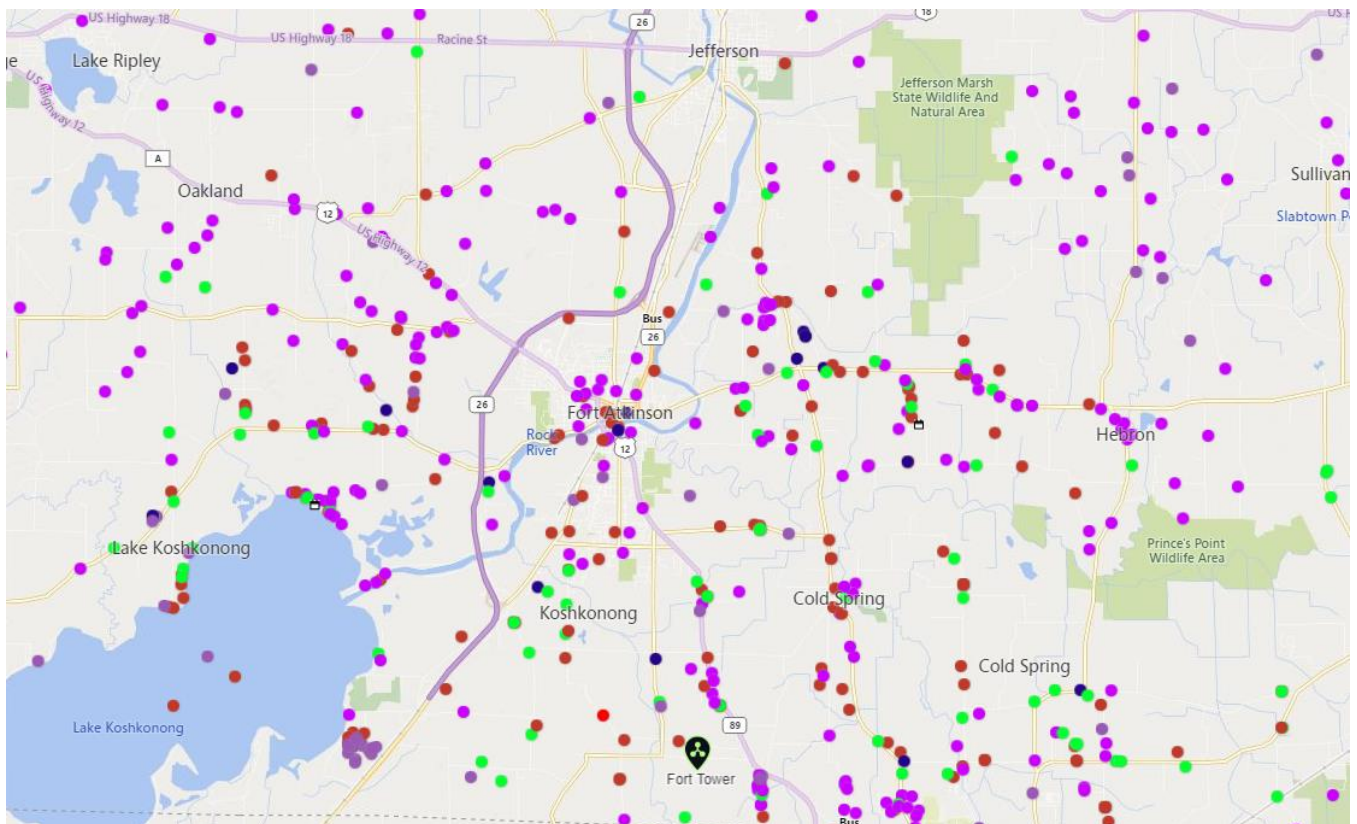
Proposed Rural Fort Atkinson





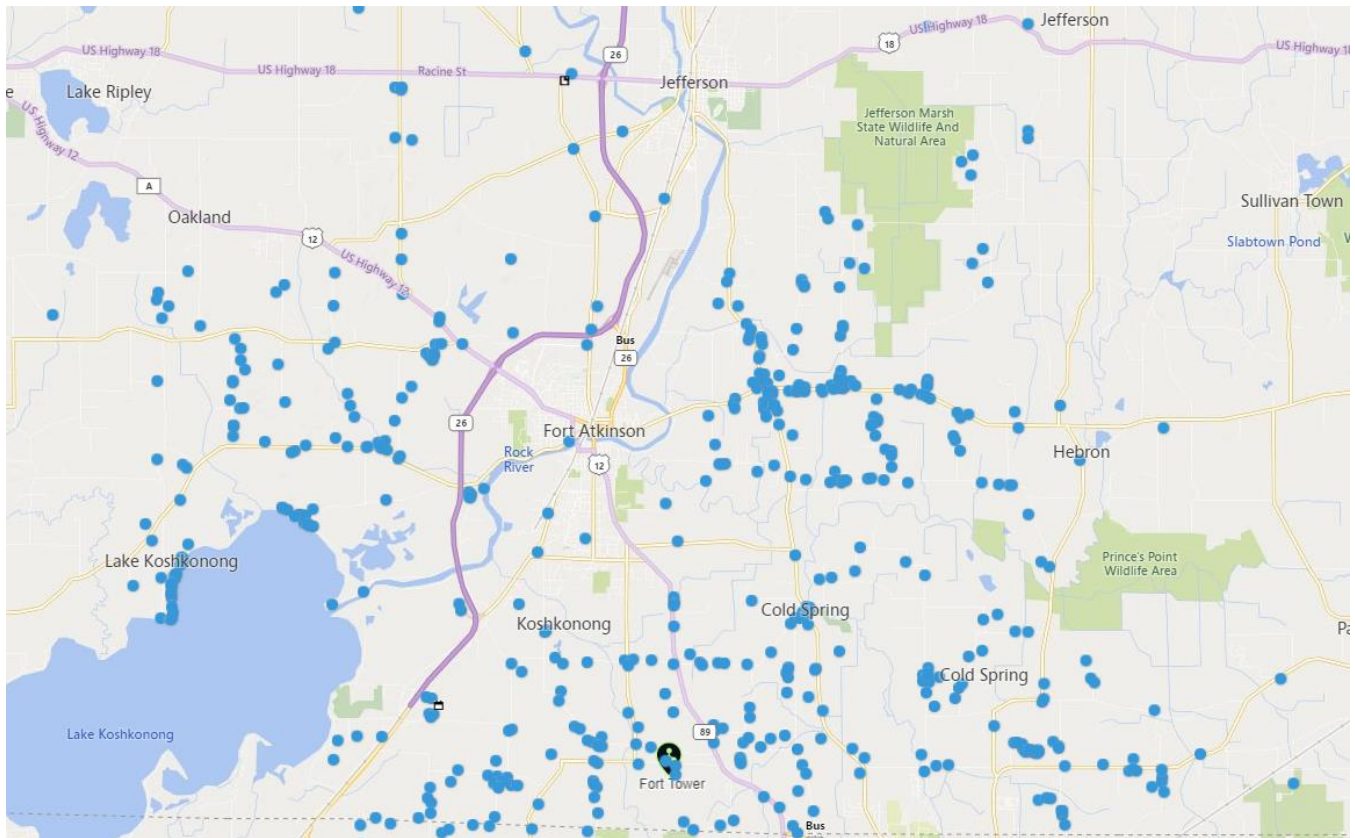
## Current Leads

Each dot on this map represents a lead that has inquired about Edge Broadband service offerings but was not able to get a wireless signal or clear line of site. All of these would benefit from a fiber optic service option.



## Active Fixed Wireless Subscribers

Each blue dot on this map represents an active fixed wireless customer of Edge Broadband. These customers are struggling to receive speeds of 25M and 3M due to terrain and foliage issues, as well as other wireless service factors. As trees grow and more wireless signals enter into the area, some customers have been forced to cancel due to unreliable fixed wireless service. Edge Broadband expanding FTTP would ensure every home – regardless of location, terrain, or foliage – could receive fast, reliable broadband service.





## Executive Summary

Whitewater Wideband LLC d/b/a Edge Broadband is a fixed wireless and FTTP internet and voice provider. Founded in 2013, Edge Broadband rapidly deployed Fixed Wireless technology to cover rural areas in Walworth, Jefferson, Rock, and Waukesha counties. Edge Broadband was one of the first providers to offer 10M/2M, and eventually 25M/3M, in many of these rural areas where no wireline or wireless services providers existed.

In early 2017, faced with challenges of terrain, foliage, and bandwidth capacity, Edge Broadband invested in their first out-of-pocket FTTP project in rural Elkhorn, Wisconsin with symmetrical speeds of up to 1,000Mbps for only \$84.35/m.

Edge Broadband has since participated in the past five Broadband Expansion Grant programs, winning each one (5-FB-2018, 5-FB-2019, 5-FB-20, 5-FB-2021, 5-FB-2022) for a total out-of-pocket investment of approximately \$1.5M, with a PSC match close to \$1.25M funding internet availability for 2,720 homes.

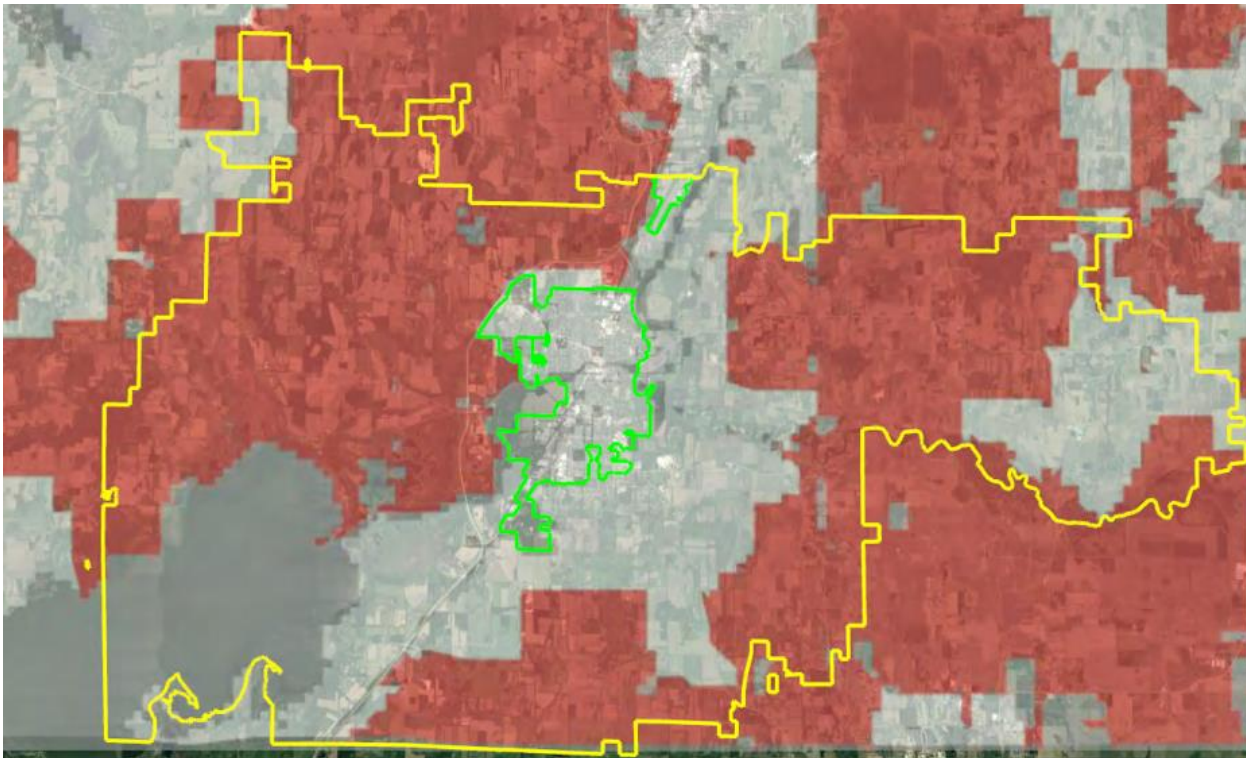
Additionally, Edge Broadband has invested its own funds in many other nonfunded projects. These include, but are not limited to, passing an additional 2,000 homes and 200 businesses in areas adjacent to prior grant winnings in Walworth County.

Edge Broadband has invested in the local community. The business employs more than 30 staff members, both directly and indirectly through various subcontractors and permanent employees. In 2022 Edge Broadband opened a new brick-and-mortar office and retail location to allow and encourage its customers to walk in and speak with staff face-to-face regarding any sales or service questions they may have. Being close to the customers they serve is a top priority for Edge Broadband.

Edge Broadband is applying for a FY2022 broadband Expansion Grant to extend an existing fiber backbone jointly constructed between the City of Fort Atkinson and School District of Fort Atkinson to reach rural areas of the district's boundary in Jefferson County. This construction will provide high-speed FTTP internet service to approximately 2,559 homes and 182 businesses in underserved and unserved areas in the townships of Koshkonong, Cold Spring, Hebron, Jefferson, Oakland, and Sumner in Jefferson County.

The estimated construction cost for this project is \$6,535,649. Edge Broadband is seeking a grant in the amount of \$1,960,695. Jefferson County has established a public/private partnership with Edge Broadband and pledges a contribution of \$250,000. Edge Broadband will provide the remaining \$4,574,954 for a 60% match of the total project cost. Edge Broadband is not seeking any grant funds for individual installation costs to the home/business such as fiber drop cable, NID, ONU/ONT, or labor for direct burial and splicing. Those costs will be covered in-kind by Edge Broadband for each location which signs up for FTTP service.

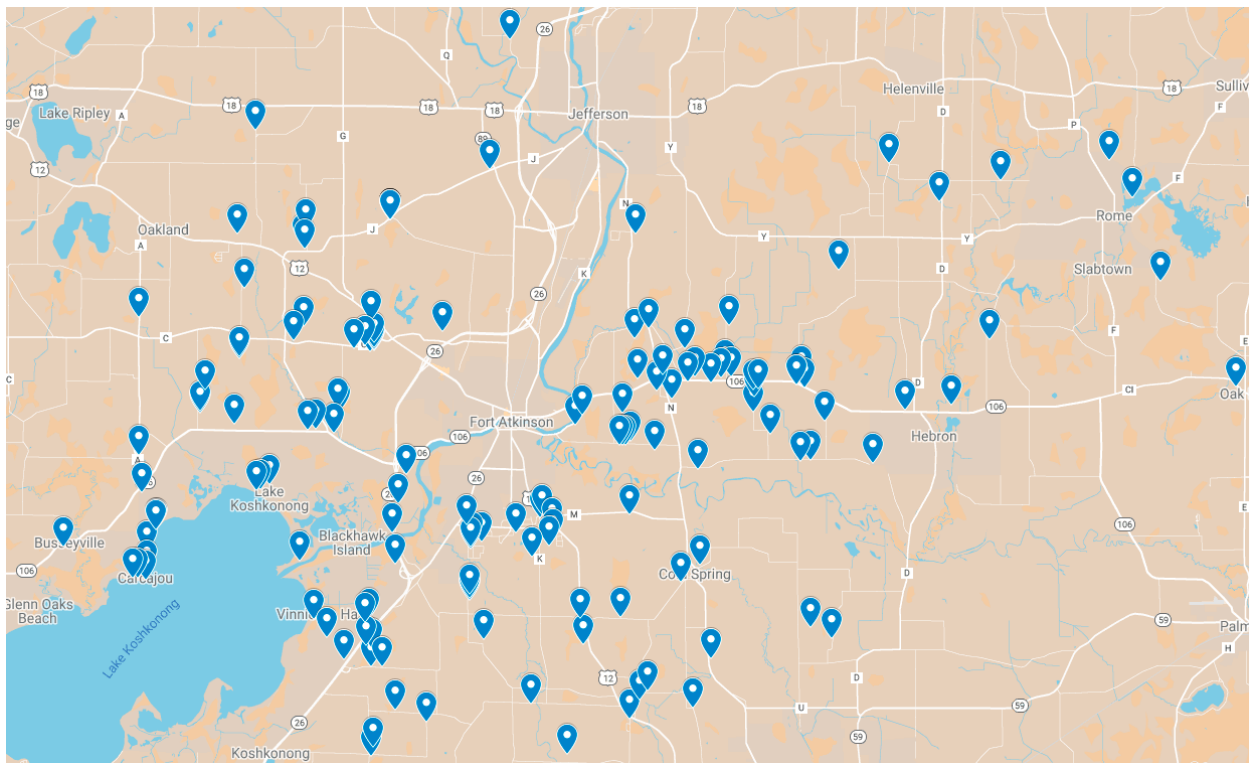
Approximately 50% of the rural school district area has no wireline provider available. These rural locations are left with limited options of fixed or mobile wireless solutions due to terrain, foliage, and other wireless challenges. Students and adults learning remotely and/or working from home, as well as telehealth patients and providers, face significant obstacles such as intermittent service, outages from weather events, high latency and packet loss, and data caps.



*-Red shaded areas – No Wireline Access*

The remaining 50% of the targeted area has two wireline providers: ATT and Spectrum. Spectrum covers less than 10% of the area with DOCSIS cable service. ATT covers approximately 40% of the rural area with speeds from .768Mbps to 15Mbps download, and .256Mbps to 1.5Mbps upload, and some small pockets closer to the city proper are listed as getting up to 25Mbps download and 2Mbps upload.

A survey was sent in both English and Spanish targeting Edge Broadband customers, Edge Broadband customer leads, school district families, and was shared on the city of Fort Atkinson and District social media outlets seeking feedback on internet availability. We received a total of 317 responses. Of those responses, 58% (184) indicated they were outside the City of Fort Atkinson -- the location this grant application is targeting. Here is a map illustrating the precise locations of those participants who indicate they were outside the City of Fort Atkinson.



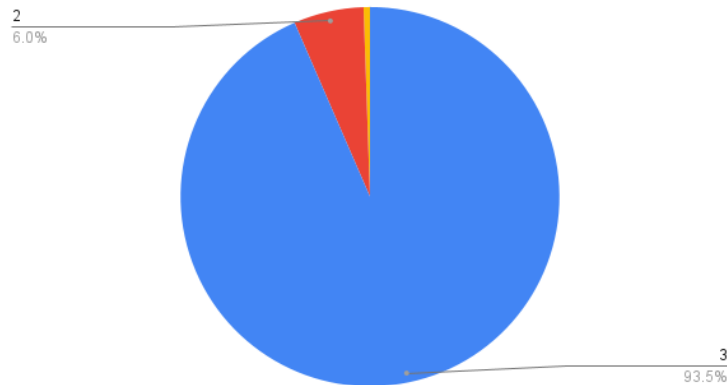
*-Blue pins – survey participants*

Of those outside the City of Fort Atkinson, 65% (120) indicated that they utilized a wireless solution for the internet (fixed wireless, cellular network, satellite) with another 6.5% (12) indicating no internet options were available to them. Eight respondents or (4.3%) indicated that they were unsure of the solution they utilized. 23.9% (44) indicated they had access to a wired connection outside the City of Fort Atkinson.

The survey directed participants to perform a speed test (<https://speed.measurementlab.net>) and indicate their actual download and upload speeds. Of all participants outside the City of Fort Atkinson with both a wired and wireless solution, the median download speed was 13.68 Mb/s and the median upload speed was 2 Mb/s. The average speeds were 27.4 Mb/s down and 6.3 Mb/s up, but it is important to note that this includes the existing wired locations which have 2 fiber-to-the-premise providers. Of the non-wired locations, the median download/upload speeds were 11/1.9 Mb/s with average speeds of 19.3/5.5 Mb/s.

We asked participants of the survey their interest in a fiber-to-the-premise solution on a scale of 1-3 where 1 was not interested and 3 was interested. Of those outside the City of Fort Atkinson, 93.5% (172) indicated they were interested, 0.5% (1) that they were uninterested, and 6% (11) were neutral.

Interest in Fiber-to-the-Premise (1 uninterested, 3 interested)



We asked participants to share any comments regarding internet availability or reliability at their location outside the City of Fort Atkinson. Here are a few submitted comments from a mix of residents and businesses who were interested in a fiber-to-the-premise solution.

- *when the service goes down and I call to report the problem, I get an intercept from the phone company saying the number is out of service*
- *My antenna is not in a ideal location. It is at risk for damage by farm machinery. Fiber optic would be preferred and more reliable in my thinking.*
- *Can't wait to get hooked up!!! :)*
- *We only have two options, Cellular or Line of Sight. We use both depending on the situation.*
- *we are down in 2 valleys so tower on our house is huge. Even with that, internet comes and goes, even on sunny fair weather days. Not enough for streaming on 2 devices consistently. When online school, internet was not consistent. Cell phone reception here is even worse.*
- *Fiber is not available, we would like to have it*
- *my career is in IT. ive got no issues with Charter other than they have no competition but I wouldnt turn down my own fibre connection that would be amazing*
- *Need faster internet asap*
- *Service has been good. Would really like more speed.*
- *Work and entertainment from home is the future. Fiber please!*
- *Our rural road has terrible internet availability. It wasn't until we added a second floor addition to our home (and the fact that we live on a hill) that we were able to have access to Edge Broadband's service...and we are still grateful for that as it has made all the difference. It was a true lifesaver when covid hit four months later and the kids had to turn to virtual schooling.*
- *I would love faster internet speed*
- *Cellular service is terrible, satellite service is available, but not good, nothing else is available. Located just south of USH12 on county road J*
- *I have a park model trailer at Jellystone Park. We live there from March until November. If reliable & affordable internet access was available I would definitely be interested as would a lot of others there.*
- *We cannot get internet due to our location. We run off of a Verizon Jetpack. Kind of hard to believe considering we are 3 miles from town. We would be interested in any other option for high speed internet access.*
- *There are currently NO service providers for internet at our current location. This leaves options for connectability only available through a mobile service provider. This is our only option and it is cost prohibitive because of the large amounts of data needed for various internet usages such as streaming and video meetings.*
- *Had satellite service but it was way too expensive*
- *Very much needed*

Funding from the PCS Broadband Expansion Grant, when combined with Edge Broadband's investment and a contribution from Jefferson County, will permit Edge Broadband to realize its goal and provide fiber optic service to underserved and unserved regions of Jefferson County in a timely manner. In addition, over the coming years it will allow Edge Broadband to continue to expand their network even further beyond this project to more residences and businesses.

Edge Broadband's FTTP solution is currently installing XGSGPON technology to provide gigabit broadband access, as well as Voice over IP service (VoIP). All service plans are no contract and unlimited usage.

Internet Service Plans

50Mbps/10Mbps - \$49.95/m  
300Mbps/100Mbps - \$69.95/m  
500Mbps/500Mbps - \$89.95/m  
1000Mbps/1000Mbps - \$99/m  
2000Mbps/2000Mbps - \$149/m  
5000Mbps/5000Mbps - \$199/m

Voice Service Plan

Residential Phone - \$25/m



## **3.2 Mandatory application requirements**

### **3.2.1 Applicant identification and contact information**

- a. Whitewater Wideband LLC d/b/a Edge Broadband  
10 W Evergreen Pkwy Suite 6  
Elkhorn, WI 53121
- b. Public/Private Partnership established with Jefferson County
- c. Edge Broadband is an approved provider and has Right-of-way agreements in place within the county and local townships for our fiber optic facilities.

### **3.2.2 Description of the project**

- a. A map of the project is displayed on pages 5 and 6 of this application
- b. Portions of the project area do lie within a census block designated as served on the PSC Broadband Map. Fixed wireless providers claims to offer up to 50Mbps download speeds and upload speeds of 10Mbps in these rural areas. However, our own data and surveys tell us that many homes are not able to get those speeds, or any service at all. Of the participants in our surveys(data attached above), the average download speed was under the 25Mbps and 3Mbps limits defined being served.
- c. This project will pass 100% of the locations in the School District of Fort Atkinson boundary, outside of the City of Fort Atkinson.
  - 2559 homes will be served. 767 currently underserved, 793 unserved
  - 182 business will be served. 91 currently underserved, 45 unserved.
  - Our service plans will range from an affordable 50Mbps/10Mbps for \$49.95, up to 1,000Mbps for 99/m. These are not promotional prices, and they will not increase after 12 or 24 months. Our XGSPON service will also offer speeds of 2,000Mbps and 5,000Mbps for \$149/m and \$199/m respectively.
- d. This is a last mile project. Edge Broadband will be extending existing fiber facilities in the city of Fort Atkinson to reach every rural home and road in the area. There is no backhaul or middle mile to be built that would skip locations and not provide service. Every location Edge Broadband passes, will be serviceable, therefor this is a last mile project.
- e. Edge will use XGSPON gear to provide up to a symmetrical 5,000Mbps to the customer using a 1x32 split method. Edge can also sell dedicated lit services for 10Gbps, 40Gbps or 100Gbps to commercial or enterprise clients.

- f. Q3-Q4 2022 – Order Supplies, Engineering, and Contractor Agreements  
 Q2-Q3 2023 - Construction begins  
 Q3-Q4 2023 – Turn up 1st phase of plant, customers installed and online  
 Q1-Q2 2024 – Construction continues, network lit up in 5 phases, customers coming online during construction as each phase reaches completion

### 3.2.3 Itemized Budget (all amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar)

a. **Contractual Expenses: \$5,074,900**

-Contractor mainline construction, restoration, splicing (\$5,074,900)

**Equipment: \$226,865**

-Telecom cabinets (\$40,000)

-XGSPON OLTs, power supplies, SFPs, and patch panels (\$186,856)

**Supplies: \$1,233,884**

-duct \$279,417.60

-handholes/pedestals/grounding/marker posts \$310,492.00

-fiber \$443,520.00

-splice cases/splitters \$200,455.00

- b. This application will not subsidize any monthly expenses or leases.
- c. This application will solely cover the cost of construction of underground facilities and the supplies needed to do so. This is a last mile project connecting to existing fiber, no leasing of middle mile services is needed nor part of the funded project. Installation and testing of the individual service to each location is nonfunded and will covered in-kind at the cost of Edge Broadband.

### 3.2.4 Priority factors supporting the application

- a. **Matching funds.** Edge Broadband proposes a 60% match of funds for this application. Additionally, installation and testing of the service to customer that signup will be at the cost of Edge Broadband and is a nonfunded expense. Edge Broadband has many leads eagerly waiting for service.
- b. **Public-private partnerships.** Edge Broadband has entered a public/private partnership with Jefferson County and the county has pledged \$250,000 towards this FTTP project. Edge Broadband, Jefferson County, and the local townships will work together on planning and construction to be prepared for future road and housing expansions.

c. **Existing broadband service.** A list of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve. In scoring this element, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The School District of Fort Atkinson sent out a broadband survey and had 184 participants from the rural area.
- Of the residents, 125(69%) responded as underserved, 56(31%) responded as unserved.

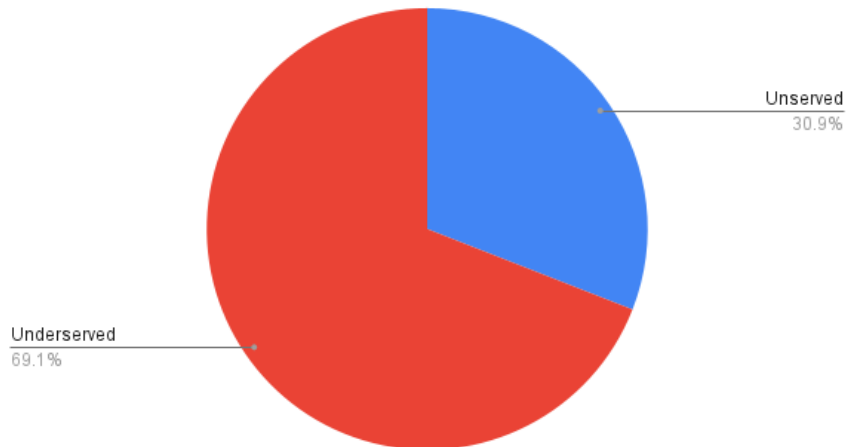
This equates to approximately 793 unserved residents in the project area.

- Of the businesses, 22(76%) responded as underserved, 7(24%) responded as unserved.

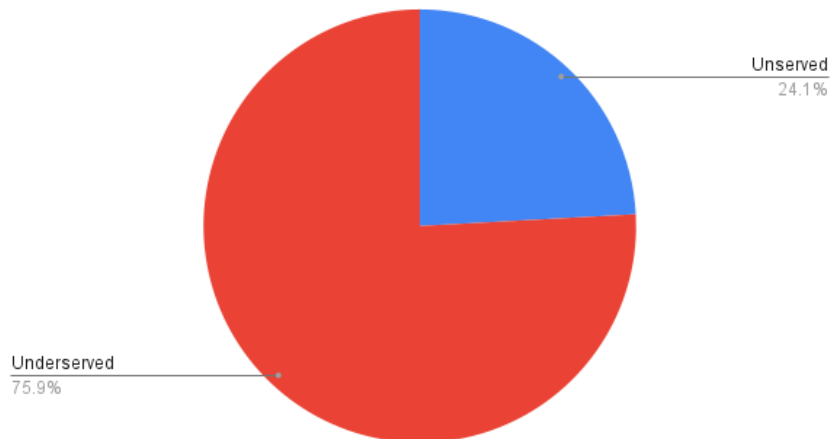
This equates to approximately 45 unserved business in the project area.

### Survey Data

181 Residents - Unserved/Underserved



29 Businesses - Unserved/Underserved



There are only 2 wireline providers in this area.

ATT covers approximately 10% of the area with up to 25M down and 2M up; 15% of the area with 10-19M down and 1.5M up; and 15% of the area with speeds ranging from .768k-9M down and .256k-1.4M up.

Spectrum covers less than 10% of the rural area with DOCSIS 3.1 cable with speeds up to 940M down and 35M up.

- 4 Fixed Wireless Providers cover the area.

Netwurx advertises 50M/20M

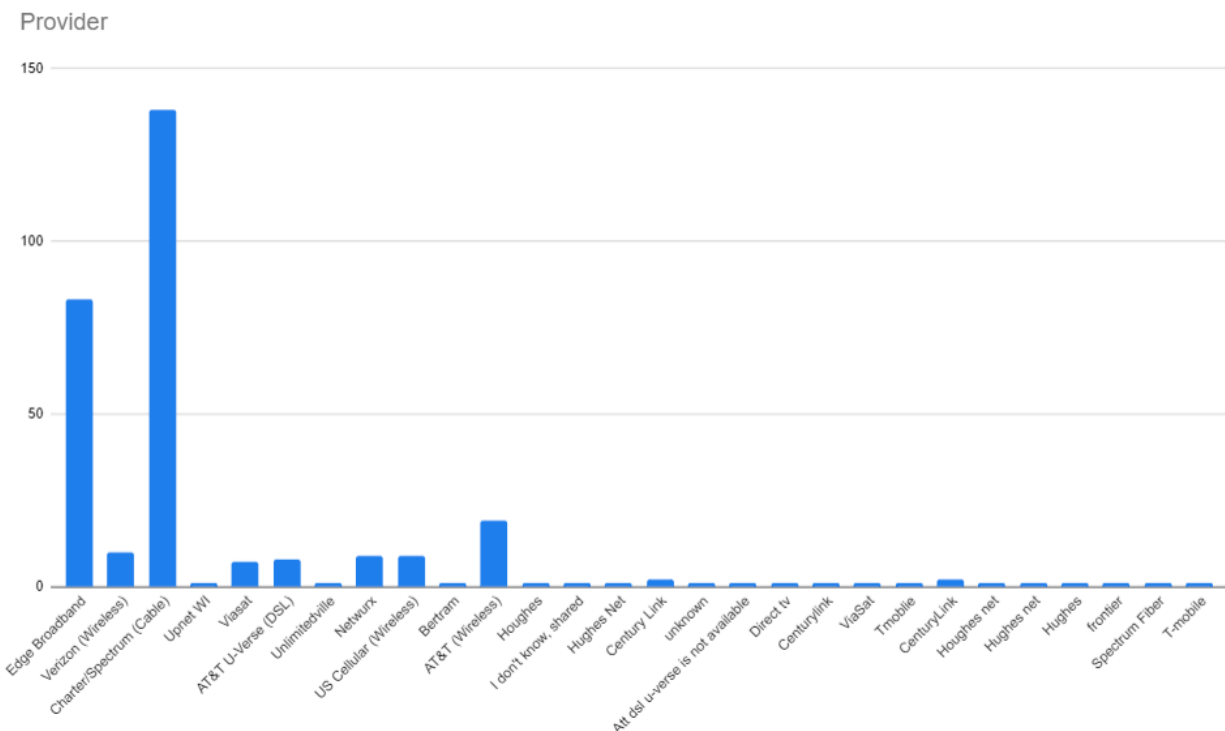
Bertram advertises 25M/10M

UpNet advertises 50M/25M

Edge Broadband advertises 10M/2M sustained, with bursting up to 20M down

Our survey sent to students and families suggest that many homes are not able to get reliable service from the fixed wireless providers, as there was less than 10 customers combined for Netwurx, Bertram and UPNet.

Edge Broadband had the most fixed wireless customers in the area, but average download speeds less than 18Mbps, and median download speeds less than 11Mbps.



- ATT, T-Mobile, US Cellular and Verizon all claim to offer service in the area, coverage is limited due to terrain, foliage and other obstructions. Median speedtest results from our survey reported 10M down and 5M up.

- d. **Project impact.** Symmetrical speeds of 5,000Mbps will be available to all homes and businesses. Businesses are also eligible to purchase speeds up to 10,000Mbps. Within a year, we anticipate 55-70% take rate due to the fact we are a local company, with a local office, and offer plans for everyone's need. We offer an affordable plan of 50Mbps/10Mbps for only \$49/m, full 1,000Mbps plans for only \$99/m, and 5,000Mbps plans for \$199/m  
We are also participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program which will provide a \$30 discount on any of our service plans.
- e. **Scalability.** We design our networks keeping reliability, cost, and growth in mind. We leave sufficient fiber strands left over to easily be able to connect more homes in the future, provide service to lots that are currently empty, or to business that wish to purchase dedicated service. We also design the network with a light level budget that would allow us a good upgrade path in the future to any newer PON technology that would allow us to offer faster service as needed.
- f. **Economic development.** The project area is primarily rural/residential, but many homeowners have stated there is a lack of service needed to for many at home services included but not limited to, working from home, remote school work, and telehealth.
- Remote work and learning, especially during a pandemic, will finally be achievable with fiber optic that has greater upload speeds and reduced latency compared to any other broadband service.
  - Homes with fiber services available, have seen anywhere from a 3% to 6% increase in property values.
- g. **Effect upon broadband service to adjacent areas.** Edge Broadbands expansion will not be exclusive or prevent any other provider from servicing this area. Edge Broadband has and will continue to expand beyond this project in the future. Any future grants or programs will only help our work go further and faster.

### **3.2.5 Other information supporting the application**

- a. Edge Broadband is building a reputation for bringing fiber optic internet service where others have skipped over for years. We continue to build projects with funded and nonfunded projects.
- Edge Broadband has since participated in the past 5 Broadband Expansion Grant programs, winning each one (5-FB-2018, 5-FB-2019, 5-FB-20, 5-FB-2021, 5-FB-2022) for a total out-of-pocket investment of about \$1.5M with a PSC match close to \$1.25M passing 2,720 homes.



- Additionally, Edge Broadband has invested its own funds in many other projects. These include, but are not limited to, passing an additional 2000 homes and 200 businesses in areas adjacent to prior grant winnings in Walworth County.
- b. This project will only overlap aging and outdate copper broadband that is not adequate for today's broadband needs.
  - c. Edge Broadbands is on its 9<sup>th</sup> year in business and has grown service ever year. We strive to provide the best service around and our reviews, take rate, and low churn proves that. Between our cash flow, SBA loans, and private loans, we have the funds secured to tackle this project in the timeline stated.
  - d. This is a last mile project.
  - e. This is a last mile project.
  - f. The residents of Jefferson County are served by a number of health care systems, including Fort Healthcare, Watertown Regional Medical Center, ProHealth Care, Advocate Aurora Heath Care, Dean Care, UW Health, Unity Point Health and Gundersen Health System. All these medical providers utilize online platforms such as MyChart to communicate with patients about test results, appointments, scheduled exams and tests, billing and for doctors and patients to message each other directly. It is a big part of the way medical care is delivered and access to reliable Internet service now is crucial to the health and wellness of the people of Jefferson County.

In addition, Jefferson County itself has made a significant investment in an online health care and wellness platform for county employees and clients called MyStrength. Reliable broadband internet access is essential for employees to make full use of these online self-care resources, tools and wellness programs that target substance use disorders, depression, chronic pain, anxiety, stress, insomnia and other health issues. Its critical to note that if people do not have access to a broadband solution that are unable to take advantage of these opportunities. Jefferson County also utilizes virtual appointments to support their clients in their on-going care.

This is driven home by Mike Wallace, CEO of Fort Healthcare, who states, "Access to reliable highspeed internet can greatly enhance quality of life for Jefferson County residents. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve. To assist in those efforts, we offer virtual care (e+Care) through our online diagnosis and treatment service. E+Care offers patients an efficient and cost-effective way to access local healthcare remotely. While not

every health problem can be treated through a virtual visit, for the conditions that Fort HealthCare can treat this way, we are able to respond to a patient's needs in an hour or less with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

"Without robust high-speed internet access in the communities we serve, patients will have barriers to accessing this cost efficient and effective type of care and will not be able to realize the benefits of virtual healthcare services. The internet's role in healthcare is here to stay and will grow as healthcare continues to evolve. In order for residents to be able to take advantage of service offerings designed to improve their health and well-being, they must have access to reliable broadband services."

- g. As everyone is well aware, the importance of the information provided below is magnified due to Covid 19. A significant student population lives in the agricultural and rural areas in Jefferson County. Those students in K-12 would benefit by having the educational playing field leveled allowing them to complete their homework at home and upload their assignments. The ability to perform research is also a critical component.

The School District of Fort Atkinson recognizes now more than ever the absolute necessity of reliable high-speed internet across our entire learning community. We have always known that learning does not stop when students head home from school for the day, but the events of the past year have presented us the undeniable evidence of incredible inequities among our students and their families. Limited broadband access for our families puts our learners at an unacceptable disadvantage as they are unable to effectively learn from home. The School District of Fort Atkinson has identified 472 families who have reported internet access insufficient to engage in remote learning, and another 69 families that have no access to internet at all.

It is our goal with this successful grant from the PSC, we can finally provide high speed broadband to everyone of those families.

- h. The local townships have welcomed our work in the area and promoted it.
- They provide us 1 single person of contact which provides timely responses and help when needed.
  - The contribution of in-kind assistance to the grant project in the form of waived fees and expenses for obtaining use permits and permissions.

- i. Letters and messages in support of the application submitted by prospective customers, local government officials, and other interested persons are attached.
- j. Edge Broadband offers managed WiFi services which includes an app so the customer can manage their WiFi in their home easily.
  - We have a brick-and-mortar store for customers to come in if and when they need any support.
  - We use all forms of marketing, flyers, yard signs, email and social marketing to reach and communicate with our leads and customers.
  - We have a special page on our website regarding the FCC ACP program. We also post it on our social media pages, as well as bring it up to customers that we notice are struggling to pay their internet bill.



## JEFFERSON COUNTY

### OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

311 S. Center Avenue, Room 111  
Jefferson, WI 53549  
Telephone (920) 674-7101  
Website: jeffersoncountywi.gov

**BEN WEHMEIER**  
County Administrator

**TAMMIE J. JAEGER**  
Administrative Secretary

**“Jefferson County: Responsible government advancing quality of life.”**

Steffany Powell Coker  
Secretary to the Commission  
Public Service Commission  
North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Coker,

I write today on behalf of Jefferson County and our communities with our goal to provide equitable and adequate broadband coverage to each corner of Jefferson County. Jefferson County has worked hard in its efforts to accelerate the pace of achieving this goal through developing a specific Broadband Working Group which has overseen numerous efforts that led the county to being designated a Broadband Forward! Community and Telecommuter Forward! Community. In addition, this work has been supported through various planning processes to include the County's Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update, the latter being approved in 2021. The community feedback for both planning documents prioritized the need for broadband countywide and the recognition that this is an essential need for education, economic development, telecommuting, healthcare, and quality of life. Further, Jefferson County's unique position in the state of being the bridge to connect the Madison and Milwaukee Region makes it even more crucial that our broadband capabilities are equitable to others on this important I-94 corridor not only for our own growth potential, but the importance of this corridor, often referred to as the I-Q Corridor, has for the state's economic future.

These strategic efforts have led to building public/private partnerships in the county's efforts to help improve this vital service to our communities. Our first partnership began with Netwurx and Bertram. Netwurx was able to receive a grant in the greater Town of Watertown area to expand fixed wireless service. This was followed by the County and Bertram, with assistance by Netwurx, on securing CARES Act funding that facilitated the construction of four large fixed wireless sites in strategic locations in the county. Despite these efforts, there were numerous areas in the county that were still identified as unserved and underserved. Further, many of the areas that may be shown to have coverage by fixed wireless sites were not accessible to receive these services due to various conditions. As such this led the county to work with Bertram and Netwurx in 2021 to apply for six applications covering various parts of the county with the PSC APRA grants to seek fiber to the premise projects. Both recognized the need for diverse methods to provide equitable and adequate broadband coverage. In the interim partners, such as school and libraries, have continued their efforts to bridge the gap for broadband. These efforts include making available hotspots and expanding capabilities of public wireless access to parking lots, so community members and students have a resource to assist them in their needs.

Parallel to the ARPA grant project being planned, the FCC released the results of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF), of which Jefferson County had several areas identified meeting the requirements for this program. The RDOF mapped areas along with previous grant project areas were consistent with the maps the PSC had produced for unserved and underserved areas of Jefferson County. Preliminary maps were released in December of 2021 for this grant application and were in place until February 9, 2022. On February 10, 2022, new maps were released showing the county no longer had any areas that were unserved or underserved. This led to one potential public/private partnership who was looking at a project in an underserved portion community from not moving forward.

As one of our school partners, who is actively trying to assist to improve the broadband access for their district, commented “magically overnight we have fixed the broadband challenges in Jefferson County.” Ironically, our residents and businesses did not get the memo either, as the access to equitable and adequate broadband on the ground did not change from February 8 to February 11.

After these maps were released, the county worked to do a sample size of transmission speeds through the county board supervisors in their districts, to validate our feedback of service availability by various county stakeholders. The county received data from 22 of our 30 supervisory districts. In general, the small sample size validates the pre-February 10, 2022, maps, recognizing some service level improvements.

Many of our county board members who represent the more rural areas continue to show that most of their speeds are below the 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload service levels. There were seven supervisory districts with less the 25 Mbps with four supervisory districts with less than 10 Mbps download speeds, ranging from 2.07 to 7.48. It should be noted that the 7.48 was reported in an urban district, not a rural district. In addition, there were seven districts where the upload speed was less than 3 Mbps with that range from .26 to 2.82, with three districts having less than 1 Mbps upload service levels.

Two other interesting notes also came out of this quick test. First, there are several supervisors in urban districts who were below the 25 X 3 speeds or just above these speeds, which reinforced the need for all parts of the county needing broadband. There was also a board member who had difficulty, due to limited broadband, to run the speed test and it took seven attempts to be able to connect. Other partners have also done a subregion study of the county through a speed test as well. The results are similar to the results in our supervisory districts, with a median download speed of 13.68 Mbps and a median upload speed of 2 Mbps. The preliminary data also indicates there is less than 30% access to wired connections outside urban service areas with primary reliance appearing to be on fixed wireless or cellular data and in some cases satellite.

Considering this information, the county would opine that access to equitable and adequate broadband appear to be more representative by the preliminary maps published on 12/8/2021 versus the current maps that indicated there are no unserved or underserved portions in Jefferson County. The county has partnered with three different partners for this grant cycle in our attempt to carry out the primary goal of providing equitable and adequate broadband for all of Jefferson County.

Respectfully submitted,



Ben Wehmeier  
County Administrator



March 10, 2022

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: City of Fort Atkinson, Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

The School District of Fort Atkinson recognizes now more than ever the absolute necessity of reliable high-speed internet access across our entire learning community. We have always known that learning does not stop when students head home from school for the day, but the events of the past two years have presented us the undeniable evidence of incredible inequities among our students and their families. Limited broadband access for our families puts our learners at an unacceptable disadvantage as they are unable to effectively learn from home. Through the DPI's Digital Equity Data, the School District of Fort Atkinson has identified 527 families who have reported internet access inconsistent or insufficient to learn at home, and another 93 families that have no access to internet at all.

It is our hope that internet services will soon be expanded to cover all of Jefferson County making learning more accessible and convenient for our students; these advances will allow all students equal opportunities for learning.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Edge Broadband's grant application for expanding broadband access so that all our families may benefit from the amazing online opportunities available to our students. I trust that you understand the importance of this expansion project for our schools.

I respectfully request that you give this broadband expansion project your utmost consideration for the maximum funding you may provide.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rob Abbott, Superintendent



DJ Scullin, Director of Technology



City of Fort Atkinson  
City Manager's Office  
101 N. Main Street  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

March 16, 2022

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6th Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: City of Fort Atkinson, Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

The City of Fort Atkinson along with the Fort Atkinson School District recognizes the absolute necessity of reliable high-speed internet access across our extended community. Through the DPI's Digital Equity Data, the School District of Fort Atkinson has identified 527 families who have reported internet access inconsistent or insufficient to learn at home, and another 93 families that have no access to internet at all.

The City has committed to waiving all permit fees, providing engineering services, and allowing this project to take advantage of existing city owned infrastructure in place along planned routes. This public / private collaboration must succeed. We must solve this issue.

It is our hope that momentum continues along the broadband front to cover all of Jefferson County making reliable internet more accessible and convenient for businesses, residents and students. Thank you for thoughtfully considering supporting Edge Broadband's grant application that benefits all residents within the greater Fort Atkinson area.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Houseman LeMire  
City Manager

Andy Selle  
City Engineer/Director of Public Works



Michael S. Wallace, FACHE  
President/CEO, Fort HealthCare  
611 Sherman Avenue East  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
E-mail: Michael.Wallace@forhc.com  
Phone: 920-568-5400  
Fax: 920-568-5412

July 21, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Fort HealthCare is writing in support of Jefferson County's application for the Broadband Expansion Grant. This grant will expand much needed access to reliable high-speed internet throughout Jefferson County.

Fort HealthCare provides quality healthcare to the residents of an eight-community area, and has the only hospital in Jefferson County. Fort Medical Group is a multi-specialty group practice with satellite clinics offering primary and specialty care in Fort Atkinson, Cambridge, Jefferson, Johnson Creek, Lake Mills and Whitewater.

Access to reliable high-speed internet can greatly enhance quality of life for Jefferson County residents. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve. To assist in those efforts, we offer virtual care (e+Care) through our online diagnosis and treatment service. E+Care offers patients an efficient and cost effective way to access local healthcare remotely. While not every health problem can be treated through a virtual visit, for the conditions that Fort HealthCare can treat this way, we are able to respond to a patient's needs in an hour or less with a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Without robust high-speed internet access in the communities we serve, patients will have barriers to accessing this cost efficient and effective type of care, and will not be able to realize the benefits of virtual healthcare services.

The internet's role in healthcare is here to stay and will grow as healthcare continues to evolve. In order for residents to be able to take advantage of service offerings designed to improve their health and well-being, they must have access to reliable broadband services.

Fort HealthCare supports this application for grant funding as a necessary part of providing virtual healthcare and other services in Jefferson County.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Wallace, FACHE  
Fort HealthCare President & CEO

# TOWN OF JEFFERSON

## COUNTY OF JEFFERSON

[townofjefferson.com](http://townofjefferson.com)

[clerk@townofjefferson.com](mailto:clerk@townofjefferson.com)

TINA BARNES CLERK  
PHONE: 920-674-5073

W7002 COUNTY HWY J  
JEFFERSON, WI 53549

To Whom It May Concern,

March 10, 2022

The Town of Jefferson is very excited to hear there is a possibility to establish broadband service to our community. Members of our Town Board and many residents reside in the School District of Fort Atkinson. We have many trees and hills in our area which have prevented us from accessing high speed internet service. This has prohibited many school district residents from having the high-speed internet needed to access the necessary learning tools.

As Clerk, I have had complaints from residents about the lack of high speed internet service. Some residents have moved out of the Town because they did not have access to high-speed internet service.

Town of Jefferson residents and Town of Jefferson Board members would benefit from better access to high-speed internet. Town Board members would be willing to work with the School District of Fort Atkinson to find a way to provide broadband internet access to our residents who are lacking this service.

Thank you,

Tina Barnes, Clerk  
Town of Jefferson  
Jefferson County



**Town of Koshkonong**  
**W5609 Star School Road**  
**Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin 53538**  
**Phone: (920)563-4510**

E-mail: [t.koshkonong@gmail.com](mailto:t.koshkonong@gmail.com)

Web site: [www.koshkonongwi.com](http://www.koshkonongwi.com)



March 10, 2022

Re: Broadband Internet Access

To Whom It May Concern:

The Town of Koshkonong would like to address the scarcity of broadband access within our community. Many of our residents are underserved and have no internet access which greatly inhibits the students of Fort Atkinson School District from participating in virtual learning.

Furthermore, the scarcity of the accessibility to the internet also hinders our adult students from continuing their education through online sources.

We fully support Edge Broadband's project to get reliable internet access to the residents of our community.

Sincerely,

Bill Burlingame  
Town Chairperson





7/20/2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs. While some people living in Jefferson County have adequate access to high speed internet connections, the "digital divide" may prevent millions of people living in other areas opportunity to take advantage of a broadband connection.

For libraries, educational opportunities such as distance learning programs, online testing and internet-based research are impacted by the lack of dependable internet services. Loading webpages and uploading files for may be compromised due to slow or no internet. Internet access should not be a barrier to educational opportunities.

Government services and employers have transitioned to an online presence. Critical government services such as Social Security, tax forms and unemployment benefits require access to online portals. In our area especially, most employers require online applications for job opportunities.

Improved access to broadband services is essential to bridging the digital divide in underserved areas. Making access a priority will enhance economic development, 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare and workforce skills and training opportunities. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural and urban areas.

Sincerely,

Eric Robinson  
Library Director  
Dwight Foster Public Library  
209 Merchants Avenue  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
920-563-7790  
erobinson@fortlibrary.org



**SUPERB MUSICALS • MEMORABLE DINING • SPECTACULAR SHOPS • FABULOUS SERVICE**

November 11, 2019

Ben Wehmeier  
Jefferson County Administrator

[benw@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:benw@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

Dear Ben,

Many areas of Wisconsin currently lack access to high-speed Internet services and the rural parts of Jefferson County are included in this group. We are vastly underserved and wish to express our support for Jefferson County's plan to bring high-speed broadband to all county residents.

Jefferson County, Wisconsin in conjunction with Bertram Communications and Netwurx has proposed a plan to build infrastructure for statewide Broadband connectivity. The services described in their proposal are needed to bring our county into alignment with larger communities.

Our County Board members realize how important high-speed Internet is for our residents and has included broadband as part of our master plan. Providing broadband services to all homes is the only acceptable option for all to survive and even thrive in these times. School age children need to be on a level playing field with their fellow students that live in the communities already served by broadband in order to access school records and assignments, communicate with teachers, and do online research. For ourselves, we routinely have work that we would like to do from home but without broadband access it's nearly impossible to connect to our business in Fort Atkinson. This means late hours at the office or making a second trip back into town in the evening in order to complete work that could easily be done at home with proper secure Wi-Fi availability. Our company's IT Manager has tried a myriad of options in order to find a solution for us but without rural broadband he's been unable to do so.

We understand the need for county support on this project. In addition to broadening our agriculture county, increasing educational opportunities, providing access to healthcare, and the overall ability to stay in touch with loved ones and clients alike, our county will be better equipped to attract new and keep existing residents, job, and businesses.

Sincerely,

Rick and Jane Klopac



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Madison, WI 53705  
November 27, 2019

RE: Jefferson County's Broadband Expansion Grant application

Dear Ms. Nieto,

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Madison College for Jefferson County's application for the broadband expansion grant that they are seeking. This grant could greatly enhance the quality of life for many rural and urban residents of Jefferson County.

Many of the students who live in Jefferson County are faced with long delays in accessing internet service. Our students regularly stay at the campus until 10:00pm, when the campus closes, because they know that they can get reliable high speed service that they can depend on to get their work assignments completed. Once they leave the campus, they have little to no connectivity that they can count upon in order to conduct research and complete course work. Because many of our County students do not have reliable high speed internet, they are forced to drive to either the Fort Atkinson campus or the Watertown campus in Dodge County, because online instruction is not an option for them at home. Without high speed internet, Madison College students cannot effectively access the College's library resources or take advantage of our online writing or tutoring centers.

Because we are such a mobile society, students regularly use their laptops, tablets and cell phones to stay connected to their classes and their instructors. In addition, students pay their bills, check their financial aid or rent textbooks from the Traux campus in Madison all online. Students depend on access to the internet, that is both, high speed and dependable. With the lack of high speed internet equity throughout Jefferson County, some students cannot enjoy the same connectivity that their classmates have with the college which puts them at a disadvantage in their classes.

It is with hopeful expectation that I urge you to approve Jefferson County's grant application to expand the Broadband access to help bring high speed internet access to greater Jefferson County. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

James S. Falco, Associate Vice President  
Regional Campuses

July 23, 2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Nieto,

I am commenting in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help the residents in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural and urban areas.

The lack of high-speed Internet access is a major road block to economic development in Jefferson County. In our digital age, the poor broadband infrastructure in place leaves a detrimental impact on small, underserved and rural communities. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. Students are placed at a competitive disadvantage as they struggle to access information online with the same ease as their peers. Residents are unable to reliably use the Internet for basic tasks such as finding job postings, booking business and personal travel arrangements and managing bank accounts. The fact of the matter is that in our connected economy, access to a broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity; without it, Jefferson County will continue to lag behind in job creation and community development.

I urge you to approve the grant application for funds to expand broadband access in Jefferson County. Enhanced mobile broadband will provide critical applications that improve the public health, safety and economic development opportunities.

Jefferson County has struggled far too long with quality high-speed Internet access and the stimulus funding as an opportunity to remedy the issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Vruwink". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "V".

DON VRUWINK  
State Representative  
43<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
DV: da

7/20/2021

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator  
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs  
Hill Farms State Office Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant

Dear Ms. Nieto:

I am writing in support of the Jefferson County Broadband Expansion Grant to help businesses in Jefferson County. Due to the scope of the project, it will impact both rural urban areas.

Reliable, high-speed internet is the most necessary means of communication. Having limited or no access to internet becomes a huge limitation for businesses. We are not able to run our business effectively without high speed internet, thus, limiting the county's promotion of job growth and increased tax base.

This also directly affects our customers by not providing them the tools necessary to communicate, place online orders and improve their customer experience.

I feel strongly that having fast internet service available to everyone should be a priority in all areas of Jefferson County. When it comes to service for customers, having internet access would allow me the ability to process many things that are now requiring the use of internet such as email, online ordering and sending electronic files. Residents could greatly improve their economic status by starting businesses and marketing themselves to the rest of the world. But to do this, they need affordable, reliable, high-speed internet.

Internet connectivity has become increasingly important in our lives. Access to broadband is no longer a luxury but essential to every day information needs.

Sincerely,

Deborah Reinbold

Partner  
The Outpost – Lake Koshkonong  
W8639 Kuehn Rd.  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538